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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 003480

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [KDEM](#) [IN](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: GOI TO RESUME NON-LETHAL MILITARY AID TO NEPAL

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt, for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[11.](#) (C) Summary: MEA Joint Secretary (North) Ranjit Rae called in PolCouns and Poloff on May 7 to inform us that the GOI, reviewing its suspension of military assistance to Nepal, had decided to release non-lethal supplies in the pipeline to the Royal Nepal Army (RNA). Indian Ambassador to Kathmandu Shiv Mukherjee has been instructed to convey this decision to King Gyanendra, while explaining the need for further steps toward restoration of Nepalese democracy. The GOI does not plan to announce its decision to the press, but a Parliamentary debate on Nepal expected for May 11-12 could force the GOI to clarify publicly its policy. Rae agreed that the USG and GOI should discuss further the question of lethal supplies, including RNA requirements for ammunition. End Summary.

Quiet Release of Supplies

[12.](#) (C) Explaining New Delhi's desire to remain in step with Washington on Nepal policy, Rae informed us of the GOI decision to release some of the non-lethal military supplies already in the pipeline, mentioning that this may include vehicles and thermal imagers, but that he was not certain of the exact composition or value of the supplies and would need to verify this with the MoD. A GOI non-paper noted that the decision to resume such assistance was an acknowledgment of positive steps the Palace had made. Rae added that the Indian response was "frontloaded" to provide positive incentives for the King to continue making progress to reverse the royal takeover of power.

[13.](#) (C) Acknowledging the political risk to the GOI in light of the King's public statements in Jakarta mischaracterizing a potential Indian resumption of arms supplies, Rae told us that Ambassador Mukherjee had been sent back to Kathmandu on May 7 and instructed to inform the King of the resumption of these specific items and nothing more. His message would be, "You took some steps, but we want to see many more steps." The GOI does NOT/NOT plan to make any public announcement of its decision, but Rae noted that this may change when the issue of military assistance to Nepal arises during May 11-12 Parliamentary debate on the PM's and FM's discussions with the King in Jakarta. If the King again makes the wrong moves, "we will have a problem," Rae stated.

USG-GOI Coordination for Delivering Supplies

[14.](#) (C) PolCouns expressed appreciation for the advance notification of the GOI decision and noted that our DATTs in Kathmandu and New Delhi had conveyed to the Indian MoD the USG intention to provide some non-lethal items, adding that these were the supplies referred to by A/S Rocca in her last visit to New Delhi. Rae asked whether these supplies were being provided on a concessional basis or if they had been purchased commercially, to which PolCouns replied that we did not know but would find out.

[15.](#) (C) Observing that delivery of USG supplies would be subject to Indian overflight clearance, PolCouns stated that we hoped we would have no problem receiving that clearance. Given that the USG and GOI were moving in tandem on the issue of non-lethal supplies, Rae doubted that there would be any difficulty, but pointed out that it typically takes a week after the request to receive clearance.

When Will the RNA Need Ammo?

[16.](#) (C) PolCouns remarked that we have been hearing more reports about RNA shortages of ammunition for M-16 and INSAS rifles, and suggested that we needed further bilateral discussions to determine where the "tipping point" is for the RNA in its need for supplies. Admitting that the GOI had also heard similar reports, Rae agreed on the importance of clarifying how dire the RNA's needs are, and that it was necessary to prevent Nepal from reaching the point where the Maoists could threaten a military victory. Additionally, Rae urged avoiding any situation that gives a public perception that the Maoists are gaining the upper hand, which could lead to "anarchy."

[17.](#) (U) Rae added that he had called in the UK DCM immediately after our meeting, who would hear the same

message.

Comment

18. (C) The GOI decision to resume the delivery of non-lethal equipment in the pipeline in parallel with a similar USG decision will help reinforce the public perception that Washington and New Delhi are moving in lock-step in response to the Palace's actions and the military situation in Nepal. However, it will also subject the government to criticism from the Left parties and national security hawks, who harshly criticized the suggestions after the Jakarta summit that the GOI was ready to resume some military supplies to the RNA even without full restoration of democracy.

BLAKE